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ABSTRACT

This paper describes a leadership model based on assumptions about connections between human development and organizational development, and the application of the model in leadership training for New Hampshire special education directors. The model assumes that four critical factors of human development outlined by Piaget and Meisels can be applied to organizational development: maturation, interaction in the social world, action in the physical world, and equilibration (balance between values and practical objectives). The model draws on Bronfenbrenner's notion of the ecological environment of development as a set of nested structures or patterns of interaction. At the 1994 New Hampshire Summer Leadership Academy in Special Education, held at Plymouth State College, special education directors were introduced to the model during training on the implementation of a vision in a school district. Educators engaged in discussions and activities to build five cohesive teams, which then worked on different aspects of developing and implementing school vision statements. These aspects included gathering information about the vision, garnering and maintaining support for the vision statement, preparing shareholders for implementation of the vision statement, implementation, and evaluation and ongoing planning. Use of the developmental leadership model during this process helped to create an atmosphere in which administrators were empowered, gained greater understanding of the big picture, applied knowledge to practical problems, and developed collegial relationships with other administrators. (SV)

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LEADERSHIP TRAINING FOR SPECIAL EDUCATORS

Fundamental to education is the great force of effects when children are learning or not, or when their instruction is not effectively managed. For us the force of these effects goes beyond increased sophistication in how or what children are learning as the nexus of schooling is its meeting point with the community. In rural schools where schools mirror community life more than in any other geographic locale (Berkeley & Bull, 1995, forthcoming; Butterworth, 1926), the force of effects of rural schooling is magnified as the school is central to the life and values of the community in which it is located. Coupling the dynamics inherent in school-community interactions, schooling as a system is made up of many people and groups who respond to problems, concerns, issues, difficulties, and increased complexity.

How, then, can it be that an ennobled enterprise, the teaching of willing and eager children, can be so complex an enterprise to lead? If schooling does mirror perhaps the best of community, how can it be that there is so much mystery in the effective leadership of schools? Can it just be the seminal characteristic of the dilemma Howard Gardner in The Unschooled Mind (1991) pointed out that appeared in Tracy Kidder's Among Schoolchildren (1989):

> Put twenty or more children of roughly the same age in a little room, confine them to desks, make them wait in lines, make them behave. It is as if a secret committee, now lost to history, had made a study of children and having figured out what the greatest number were least disposed to do, decreed that all should do it. (Gardner, p. 138; Kidder, p. 115)

If the answer is in the affirmative (and we believe that it might be), the concern for making schooling better for children and overcoming the way children have been "boxed" for generations (Sirotnik, 1983) has led us to thinking about educational leadership from a different, albeit quite positive perspective. As we began to consider this perspective, we began to devise a model or framework of leadership directly related to "vision making" in schools, thus, making schools places where ***WE*** really want to be!

Our perspective begins with the idea that school leadership should be a reflection of the interface of the individual who is providing leadership to the organization in which leadership is provided, or the environment (ecology) where the individual and the school meet. To better

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understand leadership from this perspective, we have borrowed from Piaget, Bronfenbrenner, and Meisels to frame a conceptual understanding of leading we call, ***developmental leadership***. This framework especially is fitting in special education with more and more programming for students with disabilities taking place in community schools, in inclusive or integrated classrooms in which traditional school boundaries are crossed more than in any other area of schooling.

The balance of this paper is on our views about the relationship between theoretical assumptions in human development (the connections between human development and organizational development) and the presentation of the developmental leadership model. We, then, will focus on a practical application of using the model in leadership training at the Summer, 1994 New Hampshire (NH) Special Education Leadership Institute (SELI) and on the beginnings of the use of the developmental leadership model as a foundation for planning future leadership training in New Hampshire and in implementing vision statements at the school district level.

Human Development and Organizational Behavior

Piaget (1952; 1963) discussed the dynamic on-going nature of the interaction of the human organism with the environment. This is a middle ground of development between a reliance upon biology as the mediating stimulus of developmental sophistication in the growing human individual and the environment as the crucible upon which human development occurs. In the middle ground of this continuum, Piagetian notions of development , or constructivism (e.g., development as a constructed interactive process), "exists" in which there are four important elements, or factors. Meisels (1979) suggests these factors are the essentials of development. They include: a) maturation, or growth of over time; b) actions in the physical world, or in the physical locations where development occurs; c) interactions in the social world, or the relationships among the people surrounding the developing individual; and, d) equilibration, or self-regulation or adapting to the demands confronted by a developing individual (p. 3).

In order to bring clarity to the relationships between and among these factors, Bronfenbrenner (1979) put forth the notion of an "ecology" of development. "Development," according to Bronfenbrenner "is defined...as a lasting change in the way in which a person perceives and deals with his environment." (p. 3). And human development when thought about as a unit, similar to thinking in mathematics, is a set. Here one can define a set as "...a collection of definite distinct objects of our perception or of our thought, which are called elements of the set" (Breuer, 1958, p. 4). When one considers Meisels' four essential factors, the elements of the set make-up the child, or the set also is human development.

Bronfenbrenner considers development to be "lasting change.", Similarly, Lewis and Starr (1979) discussed development in terms of change. They say, "The study of change demarcates the area of developmental inquiry. At its most basic level, the problem of development is that of finding order in change, identifying continuities in behavioral systems that are rapidly transforming and reorganizing" (p. 653). In other words, they contend, development

can be observed as something "being" at time (t) and something different at t+1, the next time we observe the human organism in activity.

By now, one probably is wondering what any of this has to do with leadership! Well, for us, Bronfenbrenner offers the link between how an individual develops and the development of an organization. Simply, though, if people change over time in their actions and interactions with the physical and social world, then, they must successfully be negotiating their way through the environment. Given that organizations through the interactions of staff, clients, and other stakeholders or shareholders change over time, they must be doing this in specific places, and by providing services they are meeting the demand of their constituent group. In this way, organizations and individuals develop in a parallel ways. That is to say, there are connections between maturation, the actions in the physical world, interactions in the social world, and equilibration occurring within and outside, but related, to the program.

There still is need for more clarity. We, *a*gain, turn to Bronfenbrenner for help as we believe in the importance of his perspective of the ecology of human development. First, he said,

> The ecological environment (of development) is conceived as a set of nested structures, each inside the next...the innermost level is the immediate setting containing the developing person. This can be the home or classroom...The next step...leads us off the beaten track for it requires looking beyond single settings to the relations between them...such interconnections can be as decisive for development as events taking place within a given setting...The third level of the ecological environment takes us farther afield and evokes a hypothesis that the person's development is profoundly affected by events occurring in settings in which the individual is not present. (1979, p. 3)

Second, he offered a more abstract view also notated as nested structures, again each level is inside the next, but this time based upon a systems framework. At the core,

> ...the complex of interrelations within the immediate setting is the *microsystems*. the principle of interconnectedness is seen as applying not only to linkages between settings, both those in which the developing person actually participates and those he (she) may never enter but in which events occur that affect what happens in the person's immediate environment. The former constitute what I shall call *mesosystems*, and the latter *exosystems*. Finally, the complex of nested, interconnected systems is viewed as a...patterns...common to a particular culture or subculture. Such generalized patterns are referred to as *macrosystems*.

By substituting program or organization for person or individual, the focus is oriented toward the development of programs not on human development.

By shifting attention in the immediate setting or in the microsystem from the developing individual to an organization, the lowest level of analysis is that of a program or agency, not a child or adult. The other levels of the system might be the organization in which the program is

located (the microsystem), for example a special education program in a school (the mesosystem) that is part of a department of special education (exosystem) that is part of a school district (macrosystem). Each aspect of this second set of nested structure descriptors specified by Bronfenbrenner is interconnected and all that occurs is interrelated. And tying this to Bronfenbrenner's first conceptualization of nested structures, the immediate setting is the program with various relationships between the program in the school building, as part of a department of special education, and as a part of the district. Next, when the state department of education, or the federal government, or the Congress, for example, enacts new policy, the staff and students in that program who were not present when the new policy was enacted into law or the program staff were told to implement the new policy, there is an impact of the policy or of the new regulations upon the program. Strength in leadership, we contend, is necessary so the interconnectedness of programs is considered to be important, thus, enhancing program efficiency.

Developmental Leadership

Why do we think Piaget, Meisels, and Bronfebrenner can be helpful in thinking about leadership? From a theoretical standpoint we point to Bronfenbrenner's thinking about the necessity "...of the environment extending beyond the behavior of individuals to encompass functional systems..." (p. 7) in which there is support for the notion that a view toward human development in the context of leadership could be helpful. From the point of levity, we suppose, "Systematic challenges, even if they disable...specific assertions, would constitute success" (Cole, 1979, p. x), especially if as Goethe suggested "Everything has been thought of before, the difficulty is to think of it again" (Cole, 1979, p. ix). So, perhaps, this connection between development and leadership has been written about previously, if it has, though, we have not seen it applied to education. And when the model was first discussed at the 1994 SELI, the participants seemed quite comfortable with the theoretical assertions that we made including the shift to applying the model to the implementation of vision statements in home school districts.

The developmental leadership model is not a set of precepts with which to indoctrinate administrators. Rather, it is a conceptual framework that provides a guide for designing the content and format of thinking about how programs can be implemented. And, the professional literature abounds with articles and books about the process of change, adaptation to change, and strategies for facilitating change that requires a unique and separate set of skills to master.

There are three assumptions that need to be made, none of which require a suspension of beliefs. First, human development from the perspectives of Bronfenbrenner, Piaget, and Meisels can be applied to organizational development and the behavior of individuals acting together as an organization. Second, the four critical factors of human development can be applied to organizational development since organizations gain experience over time (maturation) as program(s) are implemented, since there is intraindividual and interindividual interactions among those who are internal and external to the organization in a variety of settings, and these people usually satisfy the demands of the environment as they achieve organizational goals and objectives (equilibration). Most importantly, the concept of equilibration provides a context for recognizing the continual "balancing act" with which individuals struggle when striving to be

true to their own beliefs and priorities while meeting goals and objectives set out in the organizations in which they work. Third, the application of development to managing the array of tasks confronting leaders is dependent upon overseeing and being acutely aware of the constant interactions occurring among the different individuals and groups of individuals in organizations in precisely the ways that Bronfenbrenner suggested in both perspectives of nested structures.

The ability to reflect and equilibrate must be complimented by a substantive knowledge base and repertoire of strategies related to effective leadership. The success of an administrator should be a function of qualities and behaviors rather than power or position. Beck (1994) suggests that effective leaders possess many of the same qualities as effective teachers: knowledge, caring, commitment, and the ability to assist people as they reshape their thinking. That is, they have an enthusiasm for their work that they share with others (Senge, 1990). Giroux (1989) refers to such individuals as "transformative intellectuals" who "reflect on the ideological principles that inform their practice, connect pedagogical theory to practice to wider social issues, and work together to share ideas, exercise power over the condition of their labor, and embody in their teaching a vision of a better and more humane life" (p. 729).

Developmental Leadership In Practice

The four Piaget-Meisels critical factors of human development can be thought about individually and collectively; although, as a practical matter in a collective sense there is interaction of people internal and external to an organization that creates adherence to both of Bronfenbrenner's notions of nested structure. Individually, characteristics or functions of leadership can be ascribed to each factor. A partial list might include:

Maturation
Communications/Language
Leadership Practice
Reform/Change/Collaboration
Reorganizing Experience
Risk

Interaction in the Social World
Diversity: Groups & Ideas
Individuals
Families
Social Organizations
Special Interest Groups
Work Teams

Action in the Physical World
Ambiance
Community
Facilities
Home
Workplace

Equilibration
Balance in Leadership
Ethics/Honesty/Ideals/Integrity
Investment/Ownership
Meeting Emerging & Identified Needs
Professional Development & Training
Professional Standards of Practice
Program Evaluation
Technical Assistance & Consultation

Leadership Training

The theme of the 1994 NH Summer Leadership Academy in Special Education was "Building A Vision of Schooling." During the first two and one-half days, participants engaged in a series of discussions and activities designed to "build" five cohesive groups. These activities included providing practical responses to lectures about the "look" of an ideal school, engaging in discussions with parents, administrators, and a school board member, developing the notion of an "ensemble" and performing in ensemble groups, and developing supportive and interactive teams.

On the last morning of the Academy, we presented a workshop entitled "Schooling in Transition: Communicating Your Vision." In introducing the model for the first time, we discussed different traits of leadership that we thought were important to consider when a school leader goes about the implementation of a vision in a school district. These traits of leadership can be grouped under Pajak's (1993) educational functions of leadership, or empowering self and others, transcending superficial understandings, applying knowledge to practical problems, and making the future better than the present. The specific traits might include: a) the notion that success is not accidental; b) starting with an ideal, moving to the real, and relating that to the ideal in implementation; c) thinking prospectively; d) recognizing that change takes time, results are not immediate; e) leadership requires a "will and determination" among shareholders to a change process; f) affective tone in communications is crucial to success; g) clarity in communications is a necessity; and, h) effective leaders foster honesty, respect, responsibility, balance, safety, and learning among all who are partners in an organization.

From this initial presentation, Institute participants worked in the five teams on different aspects of implementing school vision statements. We called this "vision work." For Team #1, the focus was on gathering information about the vision. Team #2 concentrated on garnering and maintaining support for the short term and long term for the vision statement. Team #3 formulated a plan for preparing shareholders for the implementation of the vision statement. Team #4 considered implementation of the statement. And, Team #5 provided thoughts about evaluating the implementation of the vision statement and engaging in planned change in order to maintain the forward momentum of the vision. After this work was completed, members of these groups presented their ideas regarding their respective area of vision work and responses were provided relating the plans to the developmental leadership model as presented earlier in the day.

Early Results in Leadership Training and School District Implementation

From our perspective, participation at the summer Institute, which was planned by the participants working together with the faculty and staff of the Center for Professional Partnerships seemed to be valuable in terms of expected outcomes and for that which was unexpected. For the participants, the developmental leadership model helped to create an atmosphere in which administrators have been empowered, have gained a greater understanding

of the "big picture," and have been offered an opportunity to apply knowledge to practical problems, and, thus, fulfill a vision for training responsive to their espoused needs and to enhance their own leadership effectiveness in their home districts.

An immediate effect of involvement in the training has been gaining ownership of the professional development process for special education directors in New Hampshire. By being empowered to make decisions and determine the course of training opportunities that they want, participants have become leaders fulfilling their own professional destiny. Ownership of this process has led to a greater commitment to the developmental leadership model and, more importantly, increased commitment to the family of participating administrators.

From a pragmatic perspective, the planning and subsequent implementation of training opportunities has provided administrators with opportunities to take information from other sources (i.e., a research journal article, legal briefs, communications from the NH Department of Education) and to reflect on key issues and discuss implementations strategies. Discussions have led to more consistent interpretations of all kinds of information (i.e., laws, standards, procedures). This consistency, for example, has made it easier to assist in the transition of students from one district to another and for more efficient communication from one administrator to another. In this instance, and from the point of view of the developmental leadership model, there has been maturation in terms of administrator relationships as they contend with issues related to students and families social world) in their districts (physical places), thus, allowing for more effective implementation of programs (adapting to the demands of the environment). From the parallel Bronfenbrenner perspective of nested structures, the constant set of interactions between administrators regarding student transfers (that previous to this time may have been exceedingly difficult due to turf and fiscal issues), generally, has been overcome due to a greater understanding of the dynamics inherent in collaboration and cooperation.

Final Comments

During the past year our work through the Center for Educational Partnerships at Plymouth State College has led to the early stages of understanding the application of individual human development theory to the development and leadership taking place in organizations. Due to our work in the arena of disabilities, special education has been the focal point for determining if the developmental leadership model is viable for implementing visions of schooling, and, as it has turned out, for planning future professional development activities for New Hampshire's special education directors and their colleagues.

At a minimum thinking about the developmental leadership model since its introduction at the 1994 NH Summer Institute has provoked the following responses: a) program leadership and implementation is a continuous process that is more like a video tape than a snapshot consisting of constant interactions at different levels of a complex array of systems; and, b) the many functions of leadership thought about from a human development context can be beneficial in analyzing organizational efforts from the perspective of actors, actions, and their associations

or the roles, functions, and responses of leaders working in concert with others. The goal here, we contend is to enhance schooling for all children and to enhance the relationship between rural America's schools and the communities in which those schools are located.

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